United Nations A/73/646

General Assembly

Distr.: General
12 December 2018

Original: English

Seventy-third session
Agenda items 136 and 20 (g)

Programme budget for the biennium 2018–2019

Sustainable development: report of the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme

Report of the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.2/73/L.49

Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the statement submitted by the Secretary-General (A/C.5/73/17) on the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.2/73/L.49 regarding the report of the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). During its consideration of the statement, the Advisory Committee met with representatives of the Secretary-General, who provided additional information and clarification, concluding with responses received on 11 December 2018.

2. Under the terms of paragraph 9 of draft resolution A/C.2/73/L.49, the General Assembly would express concern about the sustainability, predictability and stability of the funding of the UNEP governing body and request the Secretary-General to make proposals, as appropriate.

3. The Secretary-General indicates in his statement that regular budget resources would be needed to fund conference-servicing, administrative, logistical and substantive support to the following activities of the UNEP governing body: (a) the fourth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, from 11 to 15 March 2019, and its subsequent sessions, to be held for five days in odd-numbered years thereafter; (b) the fourth open-ended meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to UNEP, from 4 to 8 March 2019, and its subsequent sessions, to be held every two years thereafter; (c) quarterly meetings of the Committee of Permanent Representatives; and (d) annual meetings of the Subcommittee of the Committee of Permanent Representatives (A/C.5/73/17, para. 5).

18-21717 (E) 131218

Please recycle

4. The required resources would amount to a total of $2,006,100 for the biennium 2018–2019, comprising: (a) $1,595,700 under section 2, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management; and (b) $410,400 under section 14, Environment. In addition, the projected requirements after 2019 would amount to $492,400 for 2020 and all even-numbered years thereafter and $1,684,900 for 2021 and all odd-numbered years thereafter. The resource requirements are further detailed in paragraphs 6 to 18 of the statement.

5. With respect to the requirements for the implementation of the activities for the biennium 2018–2019, the statement indicates that provisions amounting to $1,050,100 under section 2 and $87,000 under section 14 have been included in the programme budget for the biennium 2018–2019, and that an amount of $545,600 under section 2 would be absorbed within the approved 2018–2019 appropriation for the section. As regards the balance of the requirements for the biennium 2018–2019 in the amount of $323,400, the Secretary-General indicates that it would not be possible at present to identify activities within section 14 that could be terminated, deferred, curtailed or modified during the biennium (A/C.5/73/17, para. 19).

6. The Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the activities mentioned in paragraph 3 above are required under the governance structure adopted in decision 27/2 of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme, in February 2013, by which the Governing Council recommended that its name be changed to United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme and established the open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives and the Subcommittee of the Committee of Permanent Representatives. The Advisory Committee was also informed that, as existing regular budget resources reflected the requirements of the previous, more limited configuration and membership of the UNEP government body, they were insufficient to cover the higher requirements for conference services, information and communication technology, security and other services required under the current governance structure, and that the funding gap had been addressed since 2014 through extrabudgetary resources.

7. The Committee was further informed that the concern expressed in paragraph 9 of draft resolution A/C.2/73/L.49 (see para. 2 above) was interpreted by the Secretary-General as a request to place the funding of the UNEP governing body on the more sustainable, predictable and stable source of funding that is typically offered by the assessed budget, and that it was considered appropriate to address the requirements for 2019 through a statement on budgetary implications, in the absence of a specific provision that the Secretary-General should make a proposal in the context of the programme budget cycle.

8. **The Advisory Committee questions whether operative paragraph 9 of draft resolution A/C.2/73/L.49 constitutes an appropriate basis for a statement on programme budget implications. The Committee takes the view that the language of operative paragraph 9 would not automatically trigger budgetary implications, as it does not decide upon new or expanded mandates or activities, but refers, instead, to activities that have been implemented since 2013. In addition, as the draft resolution requests the Secretary-General to make proposals rather than taking a decision, as is required under the process for programme budget implications, the Advisory Committee is of the view that its intervention in this process is premature, and considers that the proposals of the Secretary-General should be first decided upon by the appropriate body, and reviewed by the Advisory Committee thereafter, if and as appropriate. The Committee therefore recommends against the related resource requirements in the amount of $323,400, under section 14, Environment, of the programme budget for the biennium 2018–2019.**